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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/936,871	09/12/2001	Uwe Hoffmann	SCH-12597	9469
40854	7590	03/24/2004	EXAMINER	
RANKIN, HILL, PORTER & CLARK LLP 4080 ERIE STREET WILLOUGHBY, OH 44094-7836			HANDY, DWAYNE K	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1743	

DATE MAILED: 03/24/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/936,871	HOFFMANN, UWE	
	Examiner Dwayne K Handy	Art Unit 1743	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM
THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 September 2001.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Beckwith (4,947,903). Beckwith teaches a material recovery apparatus for recovering loose material. The apparatus is best shown in Figure 1 and described in columns 2 and 3. The apparatus includes a suction hose (130) connected to a collection container (52), a vacuum motor (64), and a closing door (80) on the bottom of the container. The closing door (80) is attached to the lower opening (56) of the container (52) through a hinge (82) that allows the door to open. The door (80) has a rod that extends from it and has an adjustable counterweight (94) (column 3, lines 15-28). The door opens to a bin (20) through which elements that were picked up by the hose fall.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

4. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beckwith (4,947,903) in view of Hutchins (3,824,745). Beckwith teaches every element of claim 7 except for the use of a centrifugal blower. Hutchins shows a suction system for an abrading tool (Figures 1 and 4). The suction system is used to draw abraded particles from a work surface to a collection location (Abstract). The suction system includes a centrifugal impeller (49) contained within an annular compartment (54). The impeller blows air in outward radial direction through centrifugal action (column 4, lines 3-15). The air then passes through a tube that is connected to the shroud and to a bag for storage (col. 4, lines 33-42). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the centrifugal blower from Hutchins with the vacuum device of Beckwith. Beckwith already teaches a blower unit inside a cylindrical container. One would add the centrifugal blower to drive particles to the side of the container as in Hutchins. This would allow for quicker recovery of the particles since they would be collected after impacting the wall.

5. Claims 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beckwith (4,947,903) in view of Moore, Jr. et al. (3,973,935). Beckwith teaches every element of claims 8 and 9 except for a filter mounted between the blower and the collection container. Beckwith does teach the use of a screen (66) that covers the motor to prevent clogging however. Moore teaches a dust filtration system for a vacuum cleaning device. The device contains a dual filtration system that has a number of filter bags of sufficient porosity to prevent micron-sized particles from damaging the vacuum pump of the apparatus (column 7, lines 39-68). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time to combine the filters of Moore with the system of Beckwith. One would add the filters from Moore to protect the blower of Beckwith from particle damage. It would also have been obvious to provide the filter as a cartridge. One would provide the filter in cartridge form to allow for an easier changing of the filter element as needed or to provide a variety of filter sizes for different applications.

6. Claims 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beckwith (4,947,903) in view of Sharpe (3,844,896). Beckwith teaches every element of the method of claims 10-12 except for the aspiration of caps or lids. In columns 1 and 2, Beckwith teaches the energizing of the vacuum motor, using the suction hose to direct material into the container, and turning off the motor to allow material to drop through the open lower door (column 1, line 62 – column 2, line 5). In Beckwith the device is used to collect plastic packaging elements, but Beckwith also states, “it is

suited for recovering any loose material that can be vacuumed and that otherwise has properties compatible with the structure and operation of the apparatus". Sharpe teaches an automated apparatus for performing bacteriological tests. The automatic apparatus includes a delidding mechanism at one of the stations (55) for removing the lid on the Petri dishes used in the analysis. The station has a suction head (58) which is brought into contact with the lid. Suction is then applied and the lid is removed. It would have been obvious to combine the device and method of Beckwith with the vacuum lid removal teaching of Sharpe. One would add the teachings of Sharpe to remove lids from containers and collect them in a common container as in Beckwith.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Seelenbinder et al. (4,377,331) show an attachment for the removal of ammonia fumes. Ushikubo (4,515,286) and Anami (5,525,298) both show devices that remove the cap or cover from a container. Garacci (5,178,196) and Shade (5,323,819) teach systems with overhead vacuum elements. Yamaguchi (6,615,441) teaches a cleaning apparatus for cylindrical articles.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dwayne K Handy whose telephone number is (571)-272-1259. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on (571)-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

DKH
March 17, 2004


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700